

September 30, 1999

Dear Plant Protection and Quarantine Customers and Collaborators:

Collectively, we have made significant strides in the past several years towards safeguarding US plant resources from exotic pests and diseases. The future holds promise of even broader collaborations as we address growing trends in international trade and expanding global markets. But we currently face a major hurdle that could impact our effectiveness: the potential technology problems associated with the shift to the Year 2000, otherwise known as the Y2K problem.

The Y2K dilemma extends beyond potential computer related problems. I want to assure you, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) is actively planning and accommodating a broad range of potential impacts to ensure the continuous interaction and delivery of services to our customers. These considerations range from building and facility operations, to office and laboratory equipment, and (of course) all computer hardware and software programs. The following chronicles the considerable progress PPQ has achieved to ensure continuous service and to identify concerns you may have regarding our ability to meet the Y2K challenge:

Actions that Plant Protection and Quarantine has taken to assure Y2K compliance:

- Developed Year 2000 contingency plans to assure continuity in our critical business processes.
- Educated managers and employees on the problems associated with the year 2000 transition.
- Inventoried and audited: buildings and facilities, office and laboratory equipment, and computer systems and applications.
- Requested Y2K compliance certification from our suppliers and vendors
- Independently tested and verified Y2K compliance of our two most critical insect rearing facilities.
- Replaced or upgraded all computers that were not Y2K compatible.
- Remediated or replaced all of our mission critical and non-mission critical software applications.
- Conducted outreach efforts to assure that our collaborators are also Y2K compliant.
- Developed local and regional contingency plans in the event that critical services or supplies are not available on January 1, 2000.
- Tested applications, processes, and equipment, as appropriate.

Though confident there will be no interruption in our interactions or delivery of services, we will be staffing a Y2K Command Center that will monitor the status of all PPQ offices and provide solutions to address any problems should they arise.

If you have a Y2K related question, please contact us via e-mail at the following address:

PPQY2K@usda.gov. Finally, we hope you also take this time to analyze your own systems and facilities to ensure Y2K compatibility.

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard L. Dunkle

Richard L. Dunkle
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